

MERCER COUNTY Exchange

Your News Source For TRADE* Information

FALL 2006



Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to read about the Transportation Resources to Aid the Disadvantaged & Elderly (T.R.A.D.E.) Program.

We created this program to help our citizens get from place to place for grocery shopping, doctor's appointments, work, or just help in everyday activities, and I hope that you take full advantage of this subsidized resource available to you.

Since taking office, I have made it a priority to provide the best services to our seniors and county residents with disabilities. We have eliminated wait lists for T.R.A.D.E. service in Hamilton Township, East Windsor Township, expanded service routes to include the Washington Township Senior Center, and increased ridership countywide to unprecedented levels. Working in tandem with the senior centers throughout Mercer County and our Senior Nutrition Program, providing healthy and nutritious lunches for a suggested donation of \$1 per day, T.R.A.D.E. opens doors to social events, affordable meals, and increased mobility for our seniors and people with disabilities.

We are working hard every day to provide the best possible services for you, and welcome your thoughts and input. Thank you again for your interest, and I hope to see you around the county!

Sincerely,

Brian M. Hughes

Brian M. Hughes, County Executive



Ridership At An All Time High

For the first time in its' history, TRADE provided over 100,000 rides in 2005. 110,395 one-way trips were provided on TRADE Buses. This is an 18% increase over 2004. During the first six months of 2006, ridership continues to increase by 20% over last year at this time.

Down The Road - Listening To Our Customers



TRADE staff appreciates the response from our customers to our Customer Satisfaction Survey last year. This customer survey showed generally positive results for TRADE! It shows that TRADE serves an aging population who require mobility assistance and that the majority of our customers depend upon TRADE for their transportation. Customers utilize TRADE for many types of trips, and some customers utilize TRADE for multiple purposes.

What We Learned From You!

- TRADE's Bus operators perform in an outstanding manner. Satisfaction with Bus operator courtesy and safety was rated overwhelmingly high at 99% satisfaction.
Thank You TRADE Bus Operators.
- Our Reservation staff received outstanding satisfactory ratings.
Thank You TRADE Reservation Staff.

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What We Learned From You!

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- Customers did not rate their ability to make reservations for trips as highly as the other performance areas. Difficulty reaching TRADE via the phone system to make reservations was the comment received most often in the open-ended comment section of the survey.

We heard you loud and clear.

TRADE's phone system has been replaced.

- Customers also expressed concern that the comfort of vehicles could be improved.

We'll work on it.

- You told us you needed more service and options. In the open-ended question for suggestions to improve service, 22 customers suggested that TRADE increase service hours, the highest response received and to allow for pick-up times earlier in the morning and later in the evening.

TRADE staff has already addressed some of your concerns and is looking into how we can continue to expand our services.



Did You Know?

TRADE receives about 55% of its' funding from the

Senior Citizen and Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program (SCDRTAP). This grant program is administered by NJ TRANSIT. The taxes and fees collected from Atlantic City Casinos fund this program. Each County in New Jersey receives a share of these revenues for transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, which allows TRADE to continue our services.

New Policy For Donations

TRADE Transportation provides transportation to Mercer County residents who are seniors (age 60+) and residents with disabilities. TRADE does not charge a fee for our services. TRADE relies upon funds provided through the following grants:

- Senior Citizen and Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program – Administered by NJ Transit
- NJ Department of Health and Senior Services
- NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- NJ Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
- Mercer County Office on Aging
- Mercer County

It is a requirement of the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, that TRADE offer our customers an opportunity to make a donation towards the costs of our service. To meet this requirement, we will be making available on-board a self-addressed envelope for you to use if you choose to make a voluntary donation. There is absolutely no requirement that you make a contribution.

It Is Strictly A Voluntary Donation Policy.

If you do make a donation, please mail it to the address on the envelope. Our Bus Operators are there to assist you with your transportation needs and not to handle donation envelopes. We look forward to serving you and thank you for your understanding of this matter.



Read On

A Growing Need

An aging population in Mercer County, expected to increase by 80% over the next 20 years, will dramatically increase the demand for TRADE's services. The ability of persons with disabilities to confront the obstacles leading to their employment will also increase demand. It will be vital that TRADE become more efficient and that productivity improves to assist in meeting future challenges as demand increases.

Based on your comments and realizing the need to work NOW to plan for the future here's what we've done and will do to improve service for you.

- TRADE has hired 2 additional bus operators this summer, with funding made available through the Senior Citizen and Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program. More drivers and buses will be available to accommodate requests for service during the morning and afternoon.

- TRADE also received four new vehicles in March 2006 with funds made available through the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders.



- TRADE also received 3 additional vehicles to replace older vehicles. The funds for these vehicles were made available through a federal grant, the Section 5310 Program, which is administered by NJ TRANSIT.
- TRADE also now provides service to Veterans.
 - Trade will pick-up veterans in Trenton on Tuesday mornings for round-trip transportation to the VA Hospital in Lyons, NJ.
 - TRADE will pick-up veterans in Trenton on Wednesday mornings for round-trip transportation to the East Orange VA Hospital.

There is no charge to veterans for the service. Veterans who are interested in the service can contact the DMVA, Division of Veterans Programs, at 609-292-5880 or 609-292-5881. Reservations for the transportation to Lyons VA Hospital and East Orange VA Hospital need to be made in advance by calling the numbers above.

The Division of Veterans Programs is located at 28 West State Street, Room 514, in Trenton. Information about the pick-up location can also be obtained by calling: **609-292-5880 or 609-292-5881**



The Nuts & Bolts

What Is TRADE?

Trade (Transportation Resources to Aid the Disadvantaged & Elderly), a service of Mercer County, provides eligible County residents with non-emergency transportation necessary to maintain their health, improve their financial status, utilize various public and private programs and services (medical, therapeutic, recreational) and access other needed community resources.

TRADE does not establish trip priorities for residents eligible for TRADE.

Who Is Eligible For TRADE Service?

Mercer County TRADE provides transportation services to Mercer County Residents who are:

1. Senior citizens (60+) or
2. People with disabilities



TRADE Offers Two Types Of Transportation Services...

1. **SUBSCRIPTION:** trips to employment, dialysis, nutrition sites, rehabilitation sites, radiation therapy, etc., which are provided on an ongoing basis on a regular schedule.
2. **DEMAND RESPONSE:** trips to doctors' appointments, out-patient clinics, beauty parlors, or shopping, which are provided on an as-needed basis.

To take advantage of either, you must first register with the TRADE office to determine eligibility and what type of service is right for you.

It's Easy To Register!

To register call: 609-530-1971

In the Princeton/Hightstown area 609-275-2929

You can register for TRADE when you call to make to your first transportation service request. To register for TRADE, please be ready to provide our customer reservation staff with the following information:

- Name and address
- Home telephone number
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact person with telephone number
- Mobility devices used (manual or motorized wheelchair or scooter, walker, cane, crutches, etc.)
- Total family income
- Total number of residents in household

NOTE: All information is kept strictly confidential.

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Exchange

Your News Source For TRADE Information

As Executive Director of Greater Mercer TMA (Transportation Management Association) it is my pleasure to introduce this new bi-annual communication tool – Exchange. Exchange is a cooperative effort between Mercer County's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and Greater Mercer TMA. Greater Mercer TMA is an independent non-profit organization that has served Mercer County since 1984 by providing programs and information on transportation services to help people access all of the resources that Mercer County offers by all modes of transportation.

In this first issue, our goal is to provide a brief overview of TRADE's service, what has been done and what is in the works.

Exchange is designed to provide you with information and for you to provide us with your comments. So please feel free to share your thoughts with us by calling either TRADE at 609-530-1971 or our office at 609 452-8988. Or, drop us a note and mail to: Greater Mercer TMA, 15 Roszel Rd. Princeton, NJ. 08540

Greater Mercer TMA is pleased to assist with the development of this publication. I hope you enjoy it and find it useful.



Sandra Brillhart, Executive Director
Greater Mercer TMA

How Do I Schedule A Ride?

Just pick – up the phone and call the TRADE offices at 609-530-1971, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., up to 14 days prior to the date of your scheduled appointment. Appointment times for the Princeton/Hightstown area can be made by calling toll-free 609-275-2929. Demand Response appointment times are available from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For residents who suffer from speech or hearing loss you may access the New Jersey Relay service by dialing 711.

When scheduling an appointment make sure to tell the customer reservations staff the following:

- Appointment time and date
- Your destination's address and phone number
- Return ride information
- If you require a lift-equipped vehicle or if special mobility assistance is required
- If another individual will be traveling with you to provide assistance

How Much Does It Cost To Ride?

Transportation is provided FREE to eligible Mercer County residents.

Numbers To Know

TRADE Reservation Office-	609-530-1971
In the Princeton/Hightstown area	609-275-2929
Division Of Veteran Affairs -	609-292-5880 or
	609-292-5881
NJ TRANSIT Schedule and Information	800-772-2222
Access Link	800-955-2321 or
	800-955-6765 (TT)
Greater Mercer TMA/ITN GreaterMercer ...	609-452-1491

Online: Make A Connection At:

www.mercercounty.org
www.gmtma.org
www.njtransit.com

County Executive

Brian M. Hughes

Department Of Transportation And Infrastructure

Aaron T. Watson, Director
Martin J. DeNero, Director Of Trade

Board Of Chosen Freeholders

Ann M. Cannon
Anthony P. Carabelli
Pasquale Colavita
Keith V. Hamilton
Tony Mack
Elizabeth Muoio
Lucyelle R. S. Walter

Mercer County Trade Funded By:

Senior Citizen And Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program (Administered By NJ Transit)
State Of New Jersey – Department Of Health And Senior Services Title III Of The Older Americans Act
NJ Department Of Labor And Workforce Development
Mercer County Office On Aging
Mercer County

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Exchange is made possible by NJDOT through a grant from FHWA